

Know Your Opportunities

For Basic Education and Vocational Training



**TANF
Single Parent
Families**

ILLINOIS
DEPOSITORY

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN





Should I go to school?

Going to school is a personal decision. You and you alone control the things that lead to your personal success.

Keep in mind that going to school for basic education or vocational training, full or part-time won't stop your 60-month TANF clock. It does count toward your 30-hours per-week activity requirement.

Once you've decided to go to school, DHS may be able to help.

Going to school can help you earn more money.

People who have more education or more training usually make more money than people who don't have a high school diploma.

Going to school can help you get a better job.

When you have more education or training, you can get better jobs. You can get jobs that have more benefits. You can get promoted to a better job.

Going to school can help your children.

Children do better in school when their parents have more education.

Can I go to school while I get TANF?

YES. You can go to school if:

- You need a high school diploma or GED;
- You read below a 9th grade level
(Talk to your caseworker about taking a test to see how well you can read.); or
- You need training to get a job.

Three important things you need to know about going to school.

- Your caseworker must agree with your plan to go to school.
- Your Responsibility and Services Plan (RSP) must list school as your work and training activity.
(See "What is a RSP?" section in this brochure.)
- You must go to school full-time unless a full-time program is not available or appropriate or if you must meet the work requirement.

Can I go to school and work at the same time?

YES. You can combine work and school to meet your 30-hours per-week activity requirement. For each hour of class you attend, you can count one hour of study time.

For example, if you go to school for five hours a week, you can count five hours of studying and also work for 20 hours a week.

This will not stop your 60-month TANF clock!

Does going to school affect my TANF benefits?

YES. School counts toward meeting your 30-hours per week activity requirement, **but will not stop your TANF clock.**

Only 30-hours per-week of **paid work** or full-time college with a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale will stop your 60-month TANF clock.

For basic adult education, GED preparation or vocational training:

- You can go to school full-time for up to 24 months without working, and
- You can count one hour of study time for every hour that you are in class.

After 24 months, you can keep going to school, but only if you work at least 20 hours a week.

Can I get help paying for things I need to go to school?

YES. DHS can help you pay for things you need to go to school. These include:

- Child care,
- Special uniforms,
- Books and school supplies,
- GED test fees, and
- Transportation.

Talk to your caseworker if you need these things.

You must have school listed in your RSP to get help to go to school.

The education and training rules are different for teen parents and for two-parent families. Ask your caseworker about these rules.

What is a RSP?

RSP stands for Responsibility and Services Plan. **Your RSP is your contract with DHS.** You and your caseworker work together to write your RSP for your family. Your RSP should:

- List goals and the steps you will take to meet them;
- List school, work or other activities you will do while you are on TANF; and
- List things you need help with to go to school or work, such as child care or transportation.

You and your caseworker will both sign your RSP. Keep your copy of your RSP handy.

Talk to your caseworker when you need changes to your RSP.

What should I do if my caseworker and I don't agree on my plan to go to school?

If you disagree, you have the right to a **reconciliation** meeting with your caseworker.

If you still don't agree, a mediator will be brought in to make a final decision.

For more information:

Call or visit your local Department of Human Services office.

If you have questions about any Department of Human Services (DHS) program, call or visit your local DHS office. We will answer your questions. If you do not know where your local DHS office is or if you are unable to go there, you may call the automated helpline 24 hours a day at:

1-800-252-8635

1-800-447-6404 (TTY)

You may speak to a representative between:

8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Monday - Friday (except state holidays)

For answers to your questions, you may also write:

Illinois Department of Human Services
Bureau of Customer and Provider Assistance
425 South 4th Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Visit our web site at:

www.state.il.us/agency/dhs



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